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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 04/15/09

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ARTICLES:

(1) Editorial: U.S. should rethink planned end of F-22 fighter production

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 15, 2009

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced [on April 6] that the

U.S. will place no new orders for the top-of-the-line F-22 fighter jet as part of a major review of the Pentagon's spending priorities for fiscal 2010. The Defense Ministry has designated the F-22 Raptor as a likely candidate for the nation's next-generation fighter (FX), but production of the F-22 jet is now likely to be halted.

Washington has to overhaul military spending, given its sharply increasing fiscal deficit. Even so, the U.S. must not make light of the strategic impact that can be expected to appear if it decides to end the F-22 program. Considering the strategic environment in the Far East region, the Japanese government should ask the U.S. government to reconsider its recent decision. If Washington sells the product to Japan, its financial burden will be reduced as a result of the two countries sharing the production costs.

The F-22 fighter is said to be far superior to any other aircraft in view of performance, due to its high stealth capability to evade radar detection and mobility at supersonic speed. The U.S. Congress has banned the export of the F-22 under U.S. law, citing the need to protect its sensitive technology. But then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reportedly asked then U.S. President George Bush, when they met in 2007, to provide Japan with information on the product as an exception.

Japanese military officials particularly pay attention to the F-22 as a likely FX candidate, against the backdrop of recent moves by China and Russia. China has improved the quality of its fighters and missile capabilities and has also increased the number of such weapons, while Russia is ready to introduce the Su-34 fighter bomber.

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Gates explained about why he decided to halt placing new orders for the F-22, saying that the product was designed on the basis of an idea in the Cold-War period. But the cold-war structure has still been left in the Far East region, such as disputes over the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait. That is why Japan thinks introducing the F-22 is necessary.

The production of the F-22 costs 140 million dollars, or about 14 billion yen, apiece. The U.S. government deems the high cost as a problem. However, Japan has already introduced the F-2 support fighter, whose production cost per unit is as high as the F-22's, so Japan does not see the price as an absolute obstacle, focusing on its high performance.

It is still uncertain whether President Obama would decide to end the F-22 program. What the U.S. president should consider before making a final decision is what impact his decision will be brought about on Japan-U.S. relations.

On the Japanese side, there are such observations as that "the U.S. is reluctant to sell the F-22, the block of secrets, even to its allies" and "the U.S. must be giving consideration to China." Such shrewd guesses will inevitably have a negative effect on Japan-U.S. relations.

Japan is studying such models as the F-15FX, the F-18, F-35, and the Eurofighter made by a consortium of European manufacturers. If Japan selects the Eurofighter, the U.S. is expected to make a similar response to the current atmosphere of Japan. In such a case, bilateral relations might become strained.

(2) Ozawa opposed to Futenma relocation

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 1) (Full)
April 15, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa, meeting the press yesterday, indicated that he would oppose the government's plan to build a V-shaped pair of airstrips in a coastal area of Henoko, Nago City as an alternative facility for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. "If they really need a place for the construction of an alternative facility," Ozawa said, "there are many other places." He added, "The government should discuss the

issue with the U.S. government." The DPJ, in its "Okinawa Vision 2008" report, sets forth its intention to relocate Futenma airfield elsewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. Still, this is the first time for Ozawa to clarify his intention to oppose the Futenma relocation to Nago.

"The bay (of Oura) is a beautiful coral sea and the northernmost habitat for dugongs," Ozawa said. He added, "I wonder if the construction of an airfield there is absolutely essential." With this, Ozawa indicated that the government plan would be unacceptable from the perspective of environmental conservation. He also revealed that he referred to this issue in his meeting with former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Mondale yesterday.

In addition, Ozawa also brought up the relocation of Okinawa-based U.S. Marines to Guam, saying: "That is based on the United States' way of thinking from the aspect of military strategies, and I also think there is no need to forward-deploy troops on a large scale, so

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I think that's good."

Okinawa Vision 2008, released in July last year, refers to the planned relocation of Futenma airfield to Henoko's coastal area, noting that the Futenma relocation has been at a deadlock although the government has begun a field survey to assess the newly planned facility's potential impact on its environs. The policy paper describes: "Taking the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan as an opportunity, we should continue to explore a way to relocate the Futenma airfield elsewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture. Needless to say, we will aim for overseas relocation, based on the changing strategic environment."

This February, when Ozawa met with U.S. Secretary of State Clinton, he stressed the necessity of Japan-U.S. relations on an equal footing. However, he did not clarify his attitude about such specific issues as the Futenma relocation. This was taken to mean that he tried not to get too deeply involved in security issues as he wanted to avoid any constraint on a change of government.

(3) Talks between Japan and North Korea needed

MAINICHI (Page 8) (Full)
April 15, 2009

Commentary by National Defense University Professor of National Security Hideya Kurada

Given the responses of China and Russia to North Korea's missile launch, all the UN Security Council (UNSC) could do was to issue a presidential statement. Even if deliberations were held more extensively, the adoption of a resolution could not be hoped for. Although the statement does not directly refer to a "missile," it categorically notes that the launch is in contravention of UN resolution 1718, which was adopted in the wake of its nuclear test. It is thus possible to presume that what the North had launched was a missile.

The focus of efforts to reduce the threat of North Korean missiles will now shift to talks between the U.S. and the North. An easy settlement of the issue cannot be hoped for. The U.S. will be tested in terms of how it can reflect the results of bargaining with North Korea on the missile issue in the Six-Party Talks. North Korea opposed the UNSC chairman's statement, saying that the Six-Party Talks have now become unnecessary. However, it does not want to totally break the framework of the talks, because the agreement reached at them includes almost everything North Korea wants. The North will use its returning to the talks as a bargaining chip.

Handling the missile issue at multilateral talks is more difficult than handling the nuclear issue. The missile issue involves at least four stages - launch, export, development and deployment. Placing a moratorium on the launching of a missile will be the action to be taken first. However, related countries' interests in how to press ahead with the issue after that differ significantly.

Nodong missiles, which have already been deployed, are the greatest threat to Japan. The Six-Party Talks are the only effective framework for missile defense and preventing nuclear arms from being carried by Nodong missiles. Japan and North Korea should discuss the missile issue within that framework.

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(4) Taepodong and Japan (Part 4) - Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone: Father's influence and self-respect

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
April 14, 2009

Hirofumi Nakasone, 63, is the eldest son of former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, 90, who became the fourth postwar longest-serving prime minister. The former prime minister also received the Grand Cordon of the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum. Among the recipients of this decoration, only Shigeru Yoshida, Eisaku Sato, and Nakasone received the award in their lifetime. When he decided on which university he should go and also made a career decision, Hirofumi did not ask for his father's advice. He joined Asahi Chemical Industry Co., after graduating Keio University. At the company, in which he worked for 15 years, Nakasone talked about his father for the first time when his boss told him: "You have a respectable family name."

Hirofumi intended to keep a certain distance from his father. But he became a House of Councillors member in 1986. He ran in the Lower and Upper House double election carried out by his father, then Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, in his persuasion with the remark that the Liberal Democratic Party must secure all the seats in his electoral district." Hirofumi said: "Even now, some call me a 'former prime minister's son' or a 'second-generation lawmaker,' but I started my career as a salaried worker."

In assessing Nakasone, one said that although he has no qualities that befit a leader, few people speak ill of him. Persons around him therefore were surprised when Nakasone came out against the postal privatization bill in 2005, effectively ensuring its defeat in the Upper House. Although Nakasone had thought he would be treated coldly for the time being, he was unexpectedly picked to head the Foreign Ministry when the Aso administration was launched.

Before assuming the current post, Nakasone had assumed a number of posts responsible for educational issues. After becoming foreign minister, he began to carry clipped articles on diplomatic affairs in his bag. In discussions at the UN Security Council on a response to North Korea's launch of a Taepodong-2 missile, he persistently reiterated Japan's position of seeking a new resolution.

When Hirofumi was tapped to be foreign minister, some made cool comments, with one commenting: "Since he is not a House of Representatives member, he does not need to prepare himself for the next election." Another said: "The new administration has placed expectations on the effect of his family name recognition." Although he has denied the existence of his father's influence on his job, his father's presence will never vanish.

In a meeting of the Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 10, an opposition party member complained when Nakasone told a government committee member to make a reply, "A person like you, who is the son of a person who received the grand cordon, should [make a reply yourself]." Nakasone responded unusually angrily: "I will have the official do so because the facts are to be ascertained."

Just after Hirofumi was appointed foreign minister, his father encouraged him, saying: "Do your best." Although the father and the son live together, they rarely talk about work. He may not have that much time left as foreign minister.

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(5) A historical thorn between Japan and United States

Hisayoshi Ina, senior writer

President Barack Obama's Prague speech advocating a nuclear-free world reminded me of President John F. Kennedy's West Berlin speech. Kennedy's "I am a Berliner" speech of 1963 has gone down in the history of the Cold War.

The question of emotions over the bombing of Japan by the United States and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor that preceded the former is a historical issue between the two countries. A visit to Hiroshima by the U.S. President, if realized, will be implanted deeper in history than Kennedy's Berlin speech.

According to U.S. government authorities, during his stay in Japan, planned for later this year, President Obama has only the time to visit Tokyo and its vicinity. Attention will then be focused on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit to be held in Yokohama in the fall of 2010.

Previously, Japan hosted the APEC Osaka summit in 1995. For next year, such cities as Sapporo, Yokohama, Kyoto, Nara, and Hiroshima came forward to host the event, and Prime Minister Taro Aso picked Yokohama. Its closeness to Tokyo was an advantage.

Views split over Hiroshima, the A-bombed city. In view of the Obama administration's proactive stance on nuclear disarmament, journalist Fumio Matsuo has been calling for a visit to Hiroshima by the U.S. President.

According to a U.S.-Russia summit agreement, the two countries will complete a new strategic arms reduction treaty this year. If the U.S. President visits Hiroshima around the APAEC meeting next fall, he would be able to transmit the need for nuclear nonproliferation to the international community based on his achievement in nuclear disarmament. How does President Obama like this idea?

The U.S. President's visit to Hiroshima was discussed at a conference of journalists of the Asia-Pacific, held in Hawaii in 2000, before the U.S. presidential election. There, an American reporter said: "If Republican candidate Al Gore wins, there would be a possibility."

One might think that on an extension, President Obama can realize that. But things will not be that easy. Reportedly, the prevailing view in the United States is that the bombing quickened an end to the war with Japan. If a Hiroshima visit is taken to offer an apology, that would draw unexpectedly strong resistance particularly from the conservatives.

An argument affirming the bombing exists in Japan, as well. According to Amerika: Jiyu to Henkaku no Kiseki [America: Tracings of Freedom and Change] by David John Lu, Koichi Kido, who had served Emperor Hirohito as home affairs minister, made the following comment in an interview with Lu in 1967. It was an expression of a view affirming the bombing by a senior statesman.

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"My duty was to defend the nation's political system and the safety of the Emperor. The military had an extremely strong intent to deal the last blow to the American side with a battle on mainland Japan. If the bombs had not been dropped and the military had not been aware that it was hopeless to turn around the war situation, I, who was in a position to consider the safety of the Emperor as home affairs minister, would not have been able to offer my opinion to end the war."

It is believed that a visit to Hiroshima by the U.S. President should come hand in hand with a visit to Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Prime Minister.

This, too, has yet to be realized. The reason is probably because

both Japan and the United States have mixed feelings. The Memorial above the sunken USS Arizona is a venue to pay tribute to the war dead. One can still spot oil from the Arizona on the ocean surface.

Kishichiro Amae was Consul General in Hawaii in 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. He was the Japanese government's representative in Hawaii. But perhaps because of that, he was not able to attend the ceremony held at the USS Arizona Memorial on December 7 that year.

He was able to attend the ceremony in 1996 but was not allowed to lay a wreath. The wreath carrying the consul general's name had been laid in advance, and Amae remained in his seat. He was finally allowed lay a wreath in 1997.

The year 2010 will be the 50th year since the conclusion of the revised U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. To coincide with President Obama's visit to Japan, a joint statement confirming the significance of the bilateral alliance of the 21st century will be released.

The President's visit to Hiroshima and the Prime Minister's visit to Pearl Harbor carry the symbolic meaning of drawing out a historical thorn of the 20th century. That will be the base for reconfirming the alliance.

(6) Sakhalin 1 LNG export: Russia asks for Japan's assistance to build transportation network, export bases

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)
April 15, 2009

This newspaper has learned that the Russian government is asking for financial and technical assistance from Japan for the building of pipelines and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export base. The construction cost for such facilities is estimated to total 500 billion yen. Prime Minister Putin will likely sound out the Japanese side about the possibility of entering into full-scale talks with Japan on the matter when he visits in May. Extending cooperation to Russia matches Japan's energy policy of diversifying natural resource suppliers. However, it would also generate concerns about placing priority on economic cooperation, while shelving the Northern Territories issue.

According to a source familiar with Japan's diplomacy, Russia is asking for financial assistance for the building of pipelines connecting Sakhalin and Vladivostok and an LNG export base in a suburb of Vladivostok. Its plan is to purchase all the gas produced

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under the Sakhalin 1 project - a natural gas and oil development project financed by Exxon Mobil Corp. of the U.S. and Itochu Corp. - and export most of it to Japan and other countries. Russia intends to control stake in the pipelines and the LNG export base. The gas reserves at the Sakhalin 1 project site are 485 billion cubic meters, topping the reserves at the Sakhalin 2 (408 billion cubic meters) project site. Exports from the Sakhalin 2 site to Japan just started recently. About 60% of the output from the Sakhalin 2 project site is Japan-bound. These exports are expected to cover 8% of Japan's demand for natural gas.

The Japanese government has started looking into extending loans through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the building of pipelines between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. Russia plans to procure steel pipes from Japan.

(7) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

Supreme Court calls for particularly prudent judgment in establishing groping case based on victim's testimony, acquits man

Mainichi:

Supreme Court acquits man of groping girl on train, seeks supporting evidence to testimony by victim

Yomiuri:
U.S. lists 11 North Korean military-related companies subject to freezing of assets

Nikkei:
Japan in talks with Switzerland to revise tax treaty in bid to prevent tax evasion through tax havens

Sankei:
North Korea informs IAEA of its decision to pull out of six-party talks

Tokyo Shimbun:
Consumer affairs agency to be launched possibly in fall; Ruling, opposition parties agree to revise bill to strengthen supervisory body

Akahata:
Chairman Shii asks government for its swift guidance on direct employment

(8) EDITORIALS

Asahi:
(1) North Korean policy must be pursued based on UNSC presidential statement
(2) Civil servant system must be reformed to become less dependent on bureaucracy

Mainichi:
(1) UNSC presidential statement on North Korea: Solid response called for without flinching
(2) Money-Lending Business Control Law: Interest rates must be lowered swiftly

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Yomiuri:
(1) Provocation by DPRK must not be tolerated
(2) Time to graduate from the emotional rich-oriented tax-cut argument

Nikkei:
(1) "Hollowing out" of six-party talks evident in presidential statement
(2) U.S. urged to reconsider stopping production of F-22s

Sankei:
(1) UNSC presidential statement: Sanctions on North Korea must be enforced thoroughly
(2) Antipiracy legislation: DPJ must clarify its basic stance

Tokyo Shimbun:
(1) Presidential statement condemning North Korea must lead to resumption of six-party talks
(2) Man accused of groping girl acquitted

Akahata:
(1) Antipiracy legislation: Permanent law on overseas dispatch of SDF must not be allowed

(9) Prime Minister's schedule, April 14

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 15, 2009

09:02
Attended cabinet meeting in Diet building. Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura and Foreign Minister Nakasone remained.

09:30
Talked with Peruvian President Garcia on the phone at Kantei.

11:10
Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsumoto.

13:02

Attended Lower House plenary session.

15:28

Met at Kantei with LDP Election Strategy Council Chairman Koga and Deputy Chairman Suga.

16:06

Met Japan Sportfishing Association Chairman Matsui.

17:19

Met with Jordan's King Abdallah. Hosted working dinner for the king.

19:04

Met with Matsumoto.

19:34

Dined with Upper House Budget Committee Chairman Mizote and committee directors from the LDP and New Komeito at Japanese restaurant Benkeibashi Shimizu in Grand Prince Hotel, joined by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike.

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21:20

Met with Shimamura, special advisor to the LDP president, and Reform Club leader Watanabe.

22:13

Returned to the official residence.

ZUMWALT